

TAX POSSESSION COMMITTEE  
DRAFT MINUTES OF JANUARY 5, 2006 MEETING  
10:00 AM  
WESTFORD TOWN HALL

Members present: A. Justin McCarthy; Angela Harkness  
Also Present: William Turner, Conservation Coordinator; Joe Boyle, Zoning and Housing Planner

The meeting was called to order at 10:05 AM by A. Justin McCarthy.

Elections were held and officers chosen as follows. Charman: A. Justin McCarthy; Vice-Chairman: Angela Harkness; Secretary: Mary Calless (in absentia).

Justin outlined a brief history of the Committee as being a relatively passive one and pointed out that this role would probably have to change as land values increase and land itself becomes less available. Bill Turner pointed out that this was already being borne out by the fact that the Affordable Housing Committee was expressing interest in some tax title parcels.

Justin noted that properties held by the Town after tax takings and/or subsequent foreclosures can only be transferred (after a Town Meeting vote or other legitimate authorization) by a deed signed by The Tax Possession Committee. By letter dated August 3, 2005 Town Counsel has asked the TPC to ratify a previous transfer to the care, custody and control of the Conservation Commission by signing a confirmatory deed. A Motion was made (AH) and seconded (AJM) to sign a Confirmatory Deed. The Motion passed 2-0-0.

The Committee discussed the fact that there may well be other deeds requiring similar confirmation and it was determined that an investigation into previous votes would be made.

Joe Boyle, Zoning and Housing Planner presented the Affordable Housing Committee's desire for land on which to build affordable housing in Town and indicated that the Committee was presently discussing the possibility of construction on some existing tax taking parcels. Joe Boyle will get back to the Committee and let us know if any specific parcels are being requested. The Committee discussed the need for a system to clear parcels as having been properly taken and then forward that information to Town Boards and Committees or the Selectmen to see if any such parcels are of use to the Town. Unwanted parcels could then be disposed of by public auction.

Bill Turner gave the Committee a list of Town owned property with a history and derivation for each parcel. This comprehensive and exhaustive list will be further worked on, in order to separate out the tax taking pieces for further review by the Committee.

The “Mannone” parcel in Graniteville was discussed. This parcel was taken and a foreclosure action completed. The Town has recently received a letter from an attorney representing the taxpayer indicating a desire to redeem. Because of the history, size and location of the property it was determined that it probably would not be worthwhile for the Town to engage in an extended legal battle over ownership. The Affordable Housing Committee has no interest in this parcel. It was determined that Justin would contact the taxpayer’s attorney to request an offer for settlement so that the Committee could better evaluate how to proceed with this property.

Next Meeting: February 1, 2006

MEETING ADJOURNED: 10:50 AM